

TYING HER BONNET UNDER HER CHIN.

THE AMAZONIAN CORPS.

A Romance of the Army.

BY LINDA W. SLAUGHTER.

CHAPTER III.—THE DESERTED HOME.

Contrary to the Lieutenant's belief, the name of Ross Inglebright was not assumed, but belonged to him by right of birth and baptism. He was the only son of a widowed mother. His father had been a minister of the Gospel, and at the opening of the War of the Rebellion was pastor of a flourishing congregation in the town of Gayville. In command with every loyal village in the land, the community was deeply stirred by the events of that terrible struggle, and foremost among those whose sympathies were early enlisted in the Union cause, was the Rev. John Inglebright. He was an enthusiast by nature, large-souled, and inspired by a lofty purpose, impulsive and sympathetic, and possessed of the truest and most loving heart that ever beat in human bosom.

His religion was not a mere theory of words. It was earnest and practical, yet strong enough to withstand the rough attrition of every day life. It was apparent in his daily walk and conversation. His pulpit desk did not bar him from his people. He stood on a common level with his hearers, and while he preached of Christ's divinity, he carried with him into their homes and workshops the wholesome atmosphere of a healthy faith in man's humanity. A faith that was intensified by his intimate knowledge of their daily trials, their little temptations and triumphs, their ambitions and their disappointments. He spoke to them as brother to brother, and lived amongst them a happy useful life, revered as a teacher and beloved as a friend. But the war was an awakening. The high-souled young minister, who had preached of mercy and forgiveness to his peaceful parishioners, became suddenly inspired with a holy zeal. A martial fire burned in his utterances, and his sermons were little more than earnest pleadings for the loyal cause. His faith in its divine right and final triumph never faltered for an instant. His zeal inspired others. The young men of his congregation were among the first to respond to the call for God. He sent them forth with words of blessing, and the services of the church and Sabbath after Sabbath, his voice was uplifted in eloquent appeals for their success, and fervent prayers for their success.

As the war progressed, his fervor deepened. It became the all-absorbing theme, and, standing in his sacred desk, he poured forth his impassioned soul in burning words that seemed an inspiration. Such a man could not but have enemies. In all acts of the world it has been seen that they who through force of valor, or by reason of merit have arisen above the multitude become common targets for the arrows of defraction, and receive grievous wounds from the tongues of envy, of malice, and of misrepresentation, and in these latter days it has even come to pass that a man's mental weight and importance may be gauged by the number and activity of his enemies.

The Rev. John Inglebright met with his full share of opposition. There were those, even in his own congregation, who condemned his ultra views. The members of opposing parties derided him as a sensationalist, and denoted him as a "political preacher."

No community is exempt from the presence of a moderate minority, whose own garments are hopelessly soiled, and whose delight it is to throw mud against the unblemished robes of their purer or more fortunate neighbors. Believing in the dogma of personal equality, and despising of every attempt to the shade of social distinction, they were, by their very nature, antagonistic to a level with their own grade.

This class attacked him without mercy, and sorely hurt his sensitive soul, by attributing to his backsliding and lowliness his patriotic and devoted life.

But his course was unshaken. To their vilifications he gave back no bitter reply, and though reviled he reviled not again.

But at length there came a day when even these malcontents were silenced. With it came sad news to the people of Gayville. The Union arms had suffered defeat, and the tidings of disaster was heralded abroad. The Regiment to which the Company of their townsmen was attached, had been engaged in the battle and was reported "cut to pieces." The heaviest blow fell upon the devoted band of worshippers, who composed the Rev. John Inglebright's congregation. All of their young men had gone in the early days of the war, and upon them now seemed to have fallen the full weight of misfortune. "Dead," "wounded," or "missing," were the fearful words appended to each name in the sad telegram that brought mourning to half the homes in Gayville, and that struck, sharper than a stab of steel, to the loving hearts at which it was aimed.

On the Sabbath morning on which it was received, the congregation were assembling as usual at the church. The excitement was intense, but when the minister arose in his place, there prevailed a strange, sad stillness, broken only by the anguished sighs and stifled sobs of freshly wounded hearts. With a voice that thrilled with deep emotion, he said:

"My Brethren, I have no words of sympathy to offer in your sad bereavement. God only, knows the full measure of your great sorrow, and to Him I leave you. Dearest than husband, son, or brother, is our endangered country. For our dear boys who have been permitted to suffer, and who have fallen as martyrs in this holy cause, I have no regretful tears. I told them to go, now I ask you to come!"—and stepping down from his pulpit, he announced his intention of entering the war as a private in the ranks.

Then a strange scene was witnessed in that little country church. Stalwart men crowded around him, and enrolled their names. Fathers whose sons had fallen in the front, stepped forward to replace them. Brother took the place of missing brother. Neighbor and friend stood ready to re-fill the gaps left by the sorely wounded. There were weeping women, too, whose hearts were breaking with the agony of loss, and the added bitterness of parting, yet whose lips never said "stay!"

And so they went, a prayerful little band, whose trust was in the God of battles, and in their broken homes, the sad faced women waited, in the sublime heroism of patience.

The Rev. John Inglebright refused to accept a commission. At his request he was made standard bearer of a newly forming Regiment, and with his own hands carried his flag through two successive campaigns. None were braver than he, nor more beloved. In the attack of battle he bore himself with a calm and lofty courage, and in the face of danger and for.

But in the day's march, a harrowing march, the war was a tired and weary man, as they loved to call him, and beside their waning campfires, received fresh inspiration in deeds of valor from his impassioned prayers and earnest exhortations.

At the battle of the Wilderness, he fell, mortally wounded, at the head of the blue-clad defenders of the flag, whose glorious folds he loved so well. True to his trust, he was found when the tide of battle had rolled back, lying dead upon his face, with his lifeless hands clasped firmly around the staff of his beloved colors. Tearfully he was lifted, and his mangled form, wrapped in the tattered remnants of the flag his glorious death had consecrated, was borne back to his sorrowing Gayville congregation, and there laid tenderly to rest beneath the village shureyard.

All Gayville mourned as for a brother beloved. Even they who had grieved him most; who by ridicule and slander had oftentimes sorely wounded his quick sensitive nature and loving heart, now bore willing testimony to the purity of his life. The hands that had planted thorns in his pillow and filled his couch with nettles, were the first to scatter roses on his bier.

Shakespeare was an oracle in all other things, but when he said:

At their fall, the hardest heart is touched with tender feeling. Love crowns with immortality his nobler traits. Friendship lives for her choice, and gallant and charity covers his faults. No harsh judgment is heaped even from among the unthinking throng who pause to view the unfinished work where the lifeless hands have dropped it. The clamor of envy is silenced, and kindly words are spoken, the least of which, if whispered in the ear while living, would have fanned the drooping courage, and revived the fainting soul.

Far better were it otherwise. Better if men would crown the living with deserved laurels, giving to each the full measure of reward for work well done; nor withhold the meed of praise, nor wait to meet out tardy justice till the weary hands are folded and the troubled heart is still.

The wife of the Rev. John Inglebright had been a fitting mate for such a noble nature. Domestic in her tastes, and loving and meek in her nature, she was indeed a helpmeet to her husband. Her home was her kingdom, and there her gentle reign was undisputed. With affections equally divided between her husband and her children, at his death the severed ties reverted to the latter and bound them closer to her loving heart. While he lived she had held him to be highest of all men, and when he died, she became an earnest devotee, who worshipped at the shrine of a martyred saint. His influence extended throughout her life, permeating her every thought, and guiding her every act. She moulded the hearts of her little ones after the model of his own. His fearless devotion to duty, his lofty patriotism and pure character she held ever before their eyes as a pattern and an example. Ross was then ten years old. The rapid events of the war, and his father's tragic death, had made a deep and lasting impression upon his young and active mind. His mother's devotion strengthened and fortified that impression. He hung upon her words with all a boy's enthusiasm, and revered his father with an adoration scarcely less fervid than her own. Indeed, in thus striving to keep alive his memory in the minds of her children; she, unconsciously to herself, had made a hero of her son. She would talk to them by the hour together, of his noble life and his heroic death, until Ross's breast would heave with emotion, and his eyes sparkle with excitement.

"When I am a man, I will be a soldier, too," he often said,—"and if I do not die as my father did, I may live to do something greater for my country. Though my mother says there is nothing greater than to die for it, I think it would be greatest of all to spend a whole life in working for it."

Thus mused the young dreamer, until in time his whole being was pervaded by the one absorbing idea. Waking, he was haunted by the restless phantom of a mad ambition, that grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength. At home it made his daily tasks irksome and distasteful, and at school it came ever between him and his books. His pulse stirred at the recital of heroic deeds, and at night in his troubled dreams, a tormenting spirit in the guise of his dead father seemed ever to be presenting him a sword with a laurelled hilt.

Thus matters went on until Ross was in his sixteenth year. His restless disposition, and preoccupied manner had become a source of great uneasiness to his mother and friends. "Poor boy! he is studying too hard," thought the fond mother, and so he was, but his studious reflections were far removed from his books. His father's friends reasoned and expostulated to no avail. His restlessness increased, he became moody and depressed in spirit, and gave way to fits of morose. One morning he arose in a peculiarly unhappy mood. All day long he wandered aimlessly about, and toward the close of the afternoon, while loitering along a retired alley in the suburbs of the town, he observed a flaming poster on the fence. Boy-like, he paused to read it, and as he did so, his heart leaped up into his throat, and stuck there like a pin. It was the placard of our friend L. A. Smith, advertising for recruits for the infantry arm of the service.

Ross turned upon his heel and hurried breathlessly along the street, never pausing until he reached the Lieutenant's office, with what result we have already seen.

He was successful beyond his hopes in concealing his intentions from his friends. He idolized his mother, and dearly loved his three little sisters, but he could not face the opposition with which he knew they would meet his purpose if it were known. Nor was he certain of his strength to resist their entreaties, therefore his only hope of compassing the object of his ambition was in keeping his course a profound secret.

His mother's home was a cheerful little cottage, in the suburbs of the town. Mina, the eldest sister, was a bright and beautiful girl of twelve, while Winnie, "the baby," was a sweet expressive face. But upon little Mary was lavished the love of the household. She was a cripple, unable to move from her little chair without assistance. Her face and form were perfect, but under her dainty

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